

staying neutral. It should mean embracing a policy of honesty and telling one side when enough is enough. Instead, the Clinton-Gore Administration has shied away from the kind of frankness needed from our nation, and has stood aside in the face of an international political assault on our most important friend in the Middle East.

That lack of resolve is noticed. It has been noticed by those who defy sanctions on Iraq. It has been noticed by the Palestinians. And it was surely noticed by those who attacked the U.S.S. *Cole* and murdered six, maybe more American servicemen. When will this nation show the resolve needed to crush the cowards and criminals who threaten us and our allies?

I hope that the diplomatic efforts underway can lead to a calming of the situation and that the future will see a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians. However, for this peace to be truly lasting—and truly be peace—it must come when the parties are ready, on a timetable agreed by them. More important, it can only come when the Palestinians are ready to take upon themselves the mantle of nationhood and abandon their legacy of terrorism. And finally, peace will come when those who stand with the United States know that they have a forthright and loyal ally and those who stand against us fear our resolve.

ALASKAN SLED DOGS

Mr. STEVEN. Mr. President, I wish to speak about some Good Samaritans.

Recent fish disasters in Alaska have made it extremely difficult for Alaskans along the Yukon River and the surrounding areas of that river.

Dog mushers rely upon protein-rich chum salmon to feed their families, as well as their sled dogs. It takes about 100 chum salmon a year to feed one sled dog.

As a result of the fish disaster, an alarming dilemma has confronted the dog mushers. They watch their sled dogs starve or they shoot them. Now that is a terrible dilemma. Healthy Alaskan sled dogs ought not to lose their lives because of a shortage, but that is the situation that we faced. The alternative to end their misery is not one that a dog musher wants to face. It is totally unacceptable as far as I am concerned. Working with my staff, I have tried to find a solution to this problem.

Villages along the Yukon rely upon sled dogs for the transportation of goods. Use of sled dogs in rural Alaska is equivalent to the use of a vehicle in most of our Nation. Today I am able to announce, thanks to the generosity of Jim von der Heydt, executive vice president of Ralston Purina, 22½ tons of dog food will be donated by that company to Alaska's Native people from Purina's Iowa plant. It is the plant in Clinton, IA.

That food is now going to be shipped to Alaska by Lynden Transport with the assistance from the Totem Ocean Trailer Express, which we call TOTE, and the Alaska Railroad. I am extremely grateful to Jim Jansen of Lynden, Robert McGee of TOTE, and our former Governor, Bill Sheffield, who is now the head of the Alaska Railroad, for agreeing to deliver this relief to the dog mushers.

The dog food will be distributed to the dog teams by the Alaska Federation of Natives. Julie Kitka, the head of the Alaska Federation of Natives, has agreed to take on this task. I am grateful for her support and cooperation.

Lastly, let me commend James Lee Witt, the head of FEMA, for his personal assistance in this effort.

I think this is good news. I am happy to be here to talk about good Samaritans for a change.

I yield the floor.

TRANSPORTATION RECALL ENHANCEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DOCUMENTATION ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate took an important and critical step forward to improve our Nation's motor vehicle safety laws by passing H.R. 5164, the Transportation Recall Enhancement Accountability and Documentation (TREAD) Act. The bill is in response to the more than 100 deaths associated with defective Bridgestone/Firestone tires. During the debate, I intended to include a letter from Congressman BLILEY, chairman of the House Commerce Committee clarifying the intent of a provision of the bill relating to the ability of the Department of Transportation to request material from manufacturers. I ask that the letter be included in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks. The letter makes it clear that the provisions would not enable manufacturers to conceal or destroy information requested by the Secretary.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, October 11, 2000.
Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation, Washington,
DC.

DEAR JOHN: I am writing to clarify the intent of section 3(b) of H.R. 5164, the TREAD Act, as passed by the House last night.

I understand that there are concerns about the Committee's construction of the amendment to section 31066(m)(4)(B) of title 49, United States Code, relating to the Secretary's ability to request information not in possession of the manufacturer. This provision provides, in relevant part, that the Secretary may not "require a manufacturer * * * to maintain or submit records respecting information not in the possession of the manufacturer." This restriction was not in-

tended to provide manufacturers with an easy way to withhold information from the Secretary by destroying or transferring the possession of records; rather, it is intended to ensure that the Secretary does not promulgate requirements that require the manufacturer to submit information not reasonably within its possession or control.

Further, any orchestrated effort to withhold information from the Secretary with the intent to mislead him, whether through an intentional "transfer" of possession or other method, is precisely the kind of activity that could potentially subject a manufacturer to the criminal penalties under section 4 of the bill. The fundamental purpose of this legislation is to ensure that the Secretary receives the information he needs to identify defects related to motor vehicle safety at the earliest possible opportunity.

I hope that you find this explanation helpful.

Sincerely,

TOM BLILEY,
Chairman.

NEED FOR ACTION ON DEBT RELIEF

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, in the last days of this Congress, as we scramble to compete our work, I am worried that one of the most important issues before us may slip through the cracks.

Last week, I attended an extraordinary meeting at the White House, where President Clinton called together religious and political leaders to discuss the urgent need to provide debt relief for the poorest countries of the world. Looking around the table, it was clear that this was no ordinary issue, no ordinary meeting.

Just a partial list of the people in that room speaks volumes about this issue. There were bishops of several denominations, and a rabbi. The Reverend Pat Robertson was there, as was the Reverend Andrew Young. Democratic Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS was at the table, not far from Republican Congressman SPENCER BACHUS. A few seats from the President himself sat near the rock star Bono, who has become one of the most prominent spokesmen for the cause of debt relief.

President Clinton called us together because the need for debt relief is great, the logic of debt relief is compelling, and time left for us to pass debt relief legislation is alarmingly short. Failure to act now would be nothing less than a failure of the United States to lead what could be the most important international effort to bring the poorest nations of the world into a more positive, constructive role in the world economy.

Here are the facts, Mr. President. Around the world today, many poor nations actually pay more in interest payments to advanced industrial nations, and to international development banks, than they do on childhood immunizations, primary education, and other essential services.

Tragically, Mr. President, many of these countries are suffering through